

## Generous Living, David Series, Part 6

July 24, 2016

I think one of the most anticipated moments in the development of a human being is when a little baby boy or girl utters their very first word;

- That time, in a tiny person's life, where strange parents, like me, **wait with desperation to hear their perfect little baby** speak either the word "mama" or "dada".
- **Never has my inbred competitive human nature been exposed more passionately...**
- then when I **secretly spent hours coaching my innocent girls** to speak the words "dada".

Needless to say, the whole thing was probably very confusing to our little kids... particularly because **we spend every moment of their first year or two** trying to get them to speak...

- Only to spend **every moment of the NEXT 10 years** trying to get them to be a little more quiet!
- Now, some of you may be wondering whether Rebecca and Sarah first spoke the word, "mama" or "dada" first.
- But, just to show you how I've matured since then, **I'm just going to keep it to myself!**

Of course, soon after they learn "dada" and "mama," children inevitably learn the next "big" word; That's right, "**No!**"

- Actually, Psychologists tell us that "**No!**" is a very important word because, they say it helps the child **individuate**;
- **That it helps small children set boundaries... and assert his/her own sense of identity & autonomy.**
- Psychologists say it's a good stage, *this "no" stage*, although I'm convinced that **most psychologists who say this** have never had a small child of their own... or even met a small child.

Well, shortly after they master "dada" or "mama," kids begin to pick up *another* word...

- a word that they'll use quite a lot through life, especially when someone else wants to **play with one of their toys...**
- Or when someone might want to **taste some of their food.**

- **Do you know what word that is?** It's not the word, "Yours," but... **MINE!** "*My toys, my stuff, my room, my food, mine!*"
- Many people are marked by this word throughout their lives.
- It is written on their **wallets**... it's written on their **to-do lists**... it's written on their **calendars**.

So, this morning, I'd like to focus on how I believe God's people are to respond to the "mine, mine, mine" culture that we live in today.

- And, I'd like to do this by looking into several other seasons in King David's life...
- A man, who, instead of being about the proverbial "*mine, mine, mine,*" really did live a life of true generosity.

Now, as we've talked about David's life over the past five weeks... and as you've read about David in the Old Testament...

- You've certainly discover a good number of flaws in how he chose to live out various seasons of his life.
- Truth is, there were many **areas of David's life where he really did make a mess** of things.
- And yet, this was **one of those areas that David got right**: He had a generous heart. He **loved to give**... David **loved to share**.

So I think he can be a model for us, **to help us get clarity** on this question: *What does a generous heart look like?*

- If it's not the person who **gives everything away**... and it's also not the person who **hoards everything** for themselves,
- then, what does an authentic, generous heart look like?

Well, as I've thought through this a bit, I see **three different facets of a generous heart**...

- taken from **three important episodes in David's life**.
- The first one is this:

**1. A generous heart focuses on the needs of other people more than on their own discontent.**

One way to know if your heart is developing in generosity is that you'll find yourself **moved more by the needs of those around you** than by your own sense of discontent.

- **1 Samuel 30** is a classic example of David doing just that.
- It's here that we read about a small refugee village that David established for he and his band of followers and all their families....
- Most of whom were in **debt** or in **distress** and **discontented**.

Well, as we talked about last week, **while all the men** were away going after the Philistines,

- a group of Amalekites came and burned their village down... taking for themselves all their **wives, children, and possessions**.
- Can you imagine coming home to that? It says in **verse 4** that ***"they wept till they could weep no more."***
- So, David cries out to God who tells him to ***"go after the Amalekites."***

And so, in spite of the fact that they were already fatigued and demoralized,

- we see in **verse 9** that **David rallies all 600 of them** together... and they set off to find the Amalekites.
- They push real hard for about 15 miles or so until they come to this ravine... and when they get there, about a third of the men say,
- ***"We can't go another step...we don't have it in us. We haven't got the strength or the spirit. We're done."***
- So **David gives these 200 or so men permission** to stay with the supplies there at the ravine.

We're then told, in **verse 16**, that once they found the Amalekite encampment, their army was...

- ***"scattered over the countryside, eating, drinking and reveling because of the great amount of plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from Judah."***
- But amazingly, **as verse 19**, says... ***"Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back. He took all the flocks***

*and herds, and his men drove them ahead of the other livestock, saying, ‘This is plunder belongs to David.’”*

Now that sounds like a good ending to a bad story, but it’s not. **We’ve still got those two hundred guys** who stayed behind at the ravine.

- Imagine their response when they see David coming back with their **wives** and their **children** and their **possessions**.
- We’re told that, *"As David and his men approached, he greeted them."*

And yet a number of **those other 400, who went ahead with David** to find the Amalekites, were angry and said, in **verse 22**,

- *"Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered. However, each man may take his wife and children and go."*
- Those men who went ahead and put their lives on the line, cried out to David,
- *"It’s not fair. We did the work. These guys stayed behind. They’re slackers. And if they get a share, we’ll get less. So we’re keeping the plunder to ourselves."*

**They look at the 200 men** who were exhausted, had nothing left to give and stayed behind, and **they see undeserving freeloaders** who will eat into their profits.

- Truth is, **when we see people** in need, the way the world works is to say that **giving to them would threaten our own fulfillment and long-term security**.
- Because, we live in a world that says the secret to fulfillment and security is *more stuff* and giving to other people means *less stuff*.

But, look at David in **verse 23**. *"David replied, ‘No, my brothers, don’t be selfish with what the Lord has given us. He has kept us safe and helped us defeat the band of raiders that attacked us.’"*

- I love his courage here. *"The share of the men who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as those who went down into the battle. All will share alike."*

In fact, you can see in **verse 26**, that David not only gave an equal share to those who stayed behind...

- but he sent part of the plunder to different people from the various towns David and his men had received help from in the past.
- Of course, **even though David smoothed things over** with the other men... there **still had to deal with a far more angrier mob...** their wives! "So, you were too tired to come after us?!"

What **I want you to notice** in this text, though, is the **connection** between **David's gratitude** to God and **David's desire to be generous**.

- David says to the men, *"You're thinking about stuff all wrong. You know, we were all once a group of discontented, indebted fugitives. And now we have all this stuff. But we only have it because God was gracious and generous to us. So how can we not be gracious and generous with others?"*
- **Here's the point:** When David has a financial choice to make, **he begins by considering how gracious & generous God has been to him**, and then he asks, *"How can I be like that?"*

And I'll tell you, anytime you **face a financial choice**; to the degree that you understand just how **gracious & generous** God has been to you,

- to that degree will you **want to be gracious & generous to others**.
- Remember what David said in **verse 23**, *"No, my brothers, don't be selfish with what the Lord has given us... He has kept us safe and helped us defeat the band of raiders that attacked us."*
- That's what a generous heart does... it **gives away** just like its been **given to**. And yet, our world doesn't work that way.

There's a Harvard economist, **James Dusenberry**, who, after the Second World War, wrote a classic paper regarding **what drives the financial behavior of Americans** more than anything else.

- In fact, he's the guy that originated the expression, *"Keeping up with the Jones'."*
- **I mean...** *"If the Jones' have it, I've got to have it."*

- He talks about how we end up working at **jobs we don't like** to **buy things we can't use** to **impress people we don't even know**.

And even then it's not over. What do you do when the Jones' buy a new car? Well, what you do is... you refuse to play the game.

- I liked the way that **Bill Hybels** talked about it one time.
- He said, "*Just declare the Jones' as the winner. You win... The house game, the bank account game, the car game, you're the winner.*"

Decide you will stop comparing yourself to **what other people have** or **what advertisers tell you** that you need. And...

- Begin to **practice gratitude** for what you have... by **making a more regular practice of thanking God** for what you do have.
- Will you do it? I want to challenge you to make some time during your week to consider **what you do have**...
- *instead* of what you don't have... **thanking God** for His provision? Will you do that?
- The second story is found in **2 Samuel 24**, so go ahead and turn there. **Here's the second facet of a generous heart...**

## **2. Generous hearts look for opportunities to give. They're intentional about giving.**

One of the ways that you can know you're developing a generous heart is you start **looking for opportunities to give**... *not just* opportunities to acquire.

- We see this from the **very beginning of the church in Acts 4**.
- In fact, we read, in **verses 36-37**, how one the earliest church leaders, **named Joseph, sold a field** he owned and gave the money to the apostles for the work of the ministry.
- His reputation was so impressive, that he was given the nickname Barnabas (or, Son of Encouragement).

There's **another story from David's life** that highlights this a bit more... a story that no doubt encouraged even Barnabas, the "Son of Encouragement."

- In **2 Samuel 24:18**, there's been a very **destructive plague** in Israel. **Verse 18** says,
- *"On that day God went to David and said to him, 'Go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.' So David went up, as the Lord had commanded..."*

When **Araunah** looked and saw the king and his men coming toward him, he went and bowed down before David with his face to the ground.

- **Araunah** said, *"Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"*
- *"To buy your threshing floor so I can build an altar to the Lord," David answered, "that the plague on the people may be stopped."*

**Araunah** said to David, *"Let my lord the king take whatever pleases him and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing boards and ox yokes for the wood."*

- **I love this next verse.** *"But the king replied to Araunah, 'No, I insist on paying you for it.'"*
- Listen to what David says next, in verse 24... **"I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."** I love that.

Now on the surface, this doesn't seem to make a whole lot of financial sense. **Araunah is offering to give him stuff...**

- God would end up with it all anyway so what difference does it make who pays for it?
- David says, *"I know God will end up with it either way. But it will not come from my heart to God in the same way if it costs me nothing."*
- *"When I give of my possessions, I'm giving a little part of myself, and my heart changes. It gets a little bit freer from the grip of stuff — a little more devoted to God. And I want that kind of heart, so I want to pay."*

Now this is **so countercultural** because within our own culture, **we're so focused on opportunities to acquire.**

- Just think about all **those ads that offer that unique opportunity** for you to purchase that one product that can truly make your life better.

There was an ad for BMW with a caption underneath one of their top models that says: *"You can't buy happiness, but now you can lease it."*

- We live in a world that's obsessed with opportunities to acquire.
- **But the sign of a generous heart is you begin to look for opportunities** to give.

Examples of looking for opportunities to give!

Here's the deal... When you give, **you set in motion a spiritual dynamic that can't be held back**. Good things start to happen.

- They happen to the one who receives the gift. And, they happen **in the heart of the one** who gives.
- You can't give without setting this kind of spiritual dynamic in motion. **That's why Jesus says, "Give, and it will be given back to you."**

Now, of course, **that doesn't mean...** as some preachers suggest... that you'll get 10-fold back on your dollar.

- Just because we're faithful in our giving **doesn't mean that God will drop a BMW** on your lap!
- And yet, something important happens when we step outside of ourselves **and make what's most important to God... what's most important to us**.

You see, generous hearts increasingly seek opportunities to give... **and they do so** without asking or expecting anything in return.

- So, **here's my challenge to you**. Will you choose to become more intentional about your giving?
- Generous hearts intentionally seek out opportunities to give.
- Then there's the third thing:

**3. Generous hearts find more and more joy in giving.**

Generous hearts find themselves filled with more and more gladness when they give.

- That's one of the ways that you can tell that you're growing in the area of generosity... when you genuinely *like* to give more.
- In **2 Corinthians 8**, Paul is commending the Macedonians in his letter to the Corinthian believers.
- In **verses 2-3** he says, *"They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. For I can testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in the collection we're taking for the believers in Jerusalem."*
- And then he offers this final affirmation in **verse 7**... how they excelled in the **"grace of giving."**

Excelling in the "grace of giving" is one of these things I want to characterize my life. It's something that truly characterized David's.

- You can really see that in **1 Chronicles 29** as David is raising the necessary financial resources required to build a new Temple to God.
- He knows he won't be around much longer... and so he **devotes himself** to raising everything his son Solomon will need to build the temple once he's gone.

So David decides he's going to kick off the campaign by being the first to give. He says this in **verse 3**:

- ***"And now, because of my devotion to the Temple of my God, I am giving all of my own private treasures of gold and silver to help in the construction."***
- It fills him with joy to be able to give like that. **Then it starts getting contagious.**
- At the end of **verse 5** he says, *"Now then, who will follow my example and give offerings to the Lord today?"*

Look at **verse 6**. This is one of the **greatest pictures of the joy of giving** and how it infects a community...

- *"Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king's work gave..."*
- What's the next word? "**Willingly.**"

Full of humility and joy he cries out to God in **verses 13-14**... *"O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name! <sup>14</sup>But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you first gave us!"*

Then, in **verses 16-17**, he says, *"O LORD our God, even this material we have gathered to build a Temple to honor your holy name comes from you! It all belongs to you! <sup>17</sup>I know, my God, that you examine our hearts and rejoice when you find integrity there. You know I have done all this with good motives, and I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously."*

**Notice his perspective on giving:** *"Everything comes from you, God, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. It's not my stuff. God, it's your stuff."*

- From the time we were very young, we've all struggled with the idea, *"It's my stuff! It's mine."*
- But nothing is **really** mine. It all came from God.
- It was **made by God**; it **belongs to God**; it's **His stuff**, not your stuff.

If you forget everything else today, I want you to remember that! So **we're going to say it out loud!** All together now, *"It's not my stuff."*

- **When you go home this afternoon**, open the door of wherever you live and survey the inventory.
- You're going to say with great passion today, *"It's not my stuff."*
- If you start thinking about all the **long hours at work you've been putting in**... just remember... who gave you the ability to be proficient and creative at work?

When you **pull out your wallet** for the first time tomorrow... and you look at the credit cards and the money;

- Instead of saying to yourself, "*There's not enough in there,*" just remind yourself... "***It's not my stuff!***"
- "All this stuff that we get so attached to, God, it's Yours. You made it. It belongs to you. It's not my stuff."
- You see, **generous hearts require that we maintain that kind of perspective.**

But remember... the people of Israel not only gave... but they gave with a willing, joyful spirit.

- In **verse 17**, he says, "*I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously.*"
- Over and over again in this text, **David gives willingly**, the **leaders** give willingly,
- the **people rejoice and they give willingly**. And God loves that!

In **2 Corinthians 9:7**, Paul reminds the church at Corinth, "*Give what you have freely, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*"

- We have that passage printed on all our giving envelopes.
- It's just so important for us that everything that's given... be given willingly and joyfully.

See, the paradox is **we're afraid to give generously** because we think that having more stuff is the secret to happiness.

- But let me ask you... **have you ever met a really, really, happy, joyful, greedy person?** Probably not!
- But what totally characterizes this scene with **David** and his **leaders** and all the **people**... is what? **JOY!**

But to whatever degree they experienced joy that day... **just imagine how much joy God** must have felt.

- For God, who **knows nothing but the joy of generous giving**, what do you think it does to his heart when God sees his children getting it?

**In Psalm 24:1 David writes these simple words...** *“The Earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.”*

- When it comes to the Earth... all of **creation**, all its **resources**, all its **commodities**, all its **wealth**...
- They’re not mine, mine, mine! They’re HIS, HIS, HIS!
- **We get to use it** and **we get to manage it** and **we get to enjoy some of life's resources**... but God owns it all.

If your **child was clutching on to a toy** that wasn’t theirs, what would you do? You’d ask them to let go of it.

- Well... **God’s asking us to let go**... to not clutch on to what’s not ours... to be generous with what He’s made us stewards over.
- **Let me shoot pretty straight on this**... if you’re not being generous in your everyday life... would you choose to **BE** generous?
- If you’re **not being generous with what you give** to the church... would you **BE** generous?
- As fiscally conservative as we are, finances are still a great challenge... we need your generosity.

If you’re not being **generous with your time**... would you **BE** generous?

- Be willing to **come a little early to setup** the coffee and signs once a month... or stay a little later to cleanup. **BE** generous!
- **Be a helper in the nursery** once a month... **teach a Sunday School class** once a month.

**Be generous with your talents and gifts**... both in and outside the church.

- Don’t wait till life is easy and you have a lot more time... that day won’t come.
- What we saw in the early church is that they not only **gave beyond what was comfortable or convenient**...
- but like the leaders of Israel, they did so joyfully!!

First **David gives**, and then the **leaders see David giving and they give**, and then the **people see the leaders give**,

- and **they're filled with generosity, and they give**. And they have a huge party at the end of chapter 29 to celebrate!
- They had accomplished something amazing together... something that is remembered to be the golden age of Israel.
- **Winston Churchill** once said, "*You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give.*"

You see... a church that embraces a heart of extreme generosity...  
Generously offering **mercy and kindness**...

- Generously extending **love and healing and forgiveness**.
- Generously giving our **time & money**.

Generously expressing a heart that reflects Jesus' heart, where "*to give*" really is "*better than to receive...*"

- **Is the kind of church that's able to reflect to the world around us the generosity of a God**
- whose love was so extravagant as to give even His own Son... so that through Him, we could have eternal life.

So that in a world where most have grown up saying, "*mine, mine, mine,*" **let's be a community who instead turns regularly to God and says, "Yours, Lord... It's all Yours!"**

- Let's be extremely generous! How great it would be if someone would describe us as Paul describe the Macedonians...
- As a generous community who **gave joyfully**... a community who **looked for opportunities** to give...
- who **gave in a way that reflects just how the Father has given to us**.

Are you willing... are you ready to be that kind of person... are you ready to be that kind of community? Let's Pray.